

General Comments

1. Overall structure - I think the overall section organization of the report is good and follows a logical sequence of desirable information to provide the reader. One issue though is the extensive use of acronyms without explanation. Many readers will be unfamiliar with these, so I suggest using the full name when first used in the text and provide a list of acronyms in the appendix. I found most of the data rich figures illegible in the 8.5 x 11.5 format. These should be placed on separate full pages to increase size and clarity. Also, there are very few citations for information provided, but assume these will be inserted appropriately in subsequent drafts. There are several very relevant and excellent articles in the new RISG publication "Science for Ecosystem-Based Management" that should be drawn upon for the S&T report. Readers will want to be assured that information in the report is accurate and comes from reliable sources, so these citations must be provided. We might consider a status and trend approach for a web site similar to what the Buzzards Bay Estuary Program developed for their website: <http://www.buzzardsbay.org/trends.htm>. I like the trend arrows and bar graphs that give the viewer a quick and intuitive assessment of important indicators of bay health and restoration plan implementation progress. Under the Living Resources subsection, there should be information provided on habitat restoration project success (acres of salt marsh and FW wetlands restored, fish ladders installed, etc.) as a result of DEM Watershed Protection Bond and Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Fund.
2. Overview: Narragansett Bay's Watershed Ecosystem - There are three different figures given for the size of the bay watershed area, and they need to be reconciled using a standard unit of measure (sq. km or sq. mi.). I was surprised to see so little information on climate change in this section, as it has enormous ecological ramifications. For example, even though rising temperatures are noted as a cause of change in the bay, there is no reference to the actual data, which is useful to help the reader understand the magnitude of change. Nixon et al. (2003) did an extensive analysis of monitoring station data and determined that bay waters had warmed 2 degrees since 1970. This should be included in this section of the report to provide support to the text. Additionally, the report could point (web link) the reader that desires further information on climate change and issues facing RI coast to the newly adopted Section 145 of the RI Coastal Resources Management Program, which highlights the science and RI coastal policies for climate change and sea level rise. A section on coastal wetlands section should be added to compliment the freshwater wetlands section.
3. Estuarine Waters - It seems the headings and subheadings can be better organized. For example, the pollution gradient issue should be folded within the toxics section, as toxics display a definitive gradient from upper to lower bay. I will provide more specific editorial comments on the remainder of this section in a track changes document. It's unclear, however, why the Providence River dredge project is noted in this section. The channel only encompasses a very small portion of the upper bay and there remains vast deposits of toxics beyond the channel. Further, the issue of "uncapped" CAD cells is irrelevant here, as there is no movement of dumped sediment from these cells and no evidence of toxic migration.
4. Fresh Waters - Although detailed and organized well, this section is too long, in fact longer than any other section (19 pages), for purposes of the S&T report. The emphasis of the S&T is on bay health and how it is affected by freshwater input. I think this section can be reduced in size and still deliver the important information. I found the inclusion of some of the figures in this particular section as not helpful in understanding the issues. For example, the first pie chart (presumably added to support the first paragraph of text) did not match the figures in the text, and therefore, only will serve to confuse the reader. The bar graphs are much better than the pie charts for graphically displaying the data. While many river miles may be attaining full designated uses, the fact that fish tissue has not been sampled (and thus disqualifies them from achieving full designated use status) tends to skew the data. The report should be careful about how this information is provided, as the reader is left with the impression that many more river

miles are impaired just because we don't have fish tissue data yet. Also, coastal wetland issues need to be moved to another section of the S&T report and more detail provided. Need to reconcile indicators in table on p. 18/19 with the indicators in the watershed lands section (pp. 3/6 and 4/6) or better yet, list them only once. further, it would be helpful to provide more detail on how these indicators are being measured or should be measured.

5. Watershed Lands - This section can also be better organized (e.g., Impervious Surface and Transportation Impacts sections could go under Impacts of Land Development section). Issues of Concern subsection on pg. 3 of web page 6 seems too general for this section (not all problems listed are solely results of development) and could be moved to the front of the report.
6. Table 7-1 - The table should include information on progress that has been made to date to meet the goals listed. For example, many of the habitat restoration goals from the 2004 Governor's Commission Report have been met or are close to being met. CRMC can provide some numbers to help illustrate these points.